

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
**Bolshevik Revolution and
U.S. Black struggle**
—PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 74/NO. 11 MARCH 22, 2010

U.S. forces organize to hold Marjah for long haul

BY DOUG NELSON

March 6—The Taliban in Afghanistan ceded the town of Marjah and surrounding area after less than two weeks of fighting in face of an overwhelming U.S.-led assault. Despite this and improved cooperation between Washington and Pakistani intelligence against the Taliban, major challenges lay ahead for Washington, its imperialist allies, and the Afghani and Pakistani regimes.

More than eight years into the war, the offensive marks the opening battle in a new military campaign designed to replace Taliban control in southern Afghanistan with a pro-U.S. power structure, and thereby weaken anti-U.S. Islamist forces in the region. The U.S.-NATO force is being reorganized and reinforced with thousands of more U.S. soldiers in preparation for the next stage: a summer assault on Kandahar Province.

“This is a 12–18 month campaign we are embarking on,” Gen. David Petraeus, head of the U.S. Central Command, said March 2. “This is going to be a hard year.”

Imperialist forces captured Marjah—a key center of wealth and heroin production—three times before:

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Calif. protesters say: Stop education cuts!

Thousands rally against school layoffs



Militant/Betsey Stone

Rally at San Francisco Civic Center March 4 against education cuts in California

BY BETSEY STONE

SAN FRANCISCO—Many thousands of students, teachers, and other working people mobilized throughout California March 4 to demand an end to the massive funding cuts in public education here.

A spirited rally at the San Francisco Civic Center culminated the protests in the Bay Area. Rally organizers estimated the turnout at 12,000. Participation was fueled by a vote of the San Francisco School Board February 23

to send out nearly 900 layoff notices to teachers and other public school employees.

“Don’t lay off my teacher,” and “No more pink slips,” and “Enough is enough” were popular slogans on the sea of handmade signs.

The boisterous contingent from Daly City included elementary school children up through college students and teachers. They marched with a giant sign: “Currently \$1.5 million underfunded . . . and you want to cut more!?!”

“They’ve ended summer school, cut the school year by a week, cut after school programs and now, instead of around 20 students in our math and

Continued on page 3

Iceland vote shows anger at bailouts, austerity

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Voters in Iceland overwhelmingly rejected a deal March 6 to pay billions of dollars to the British and Dutch governments to cover losses from a failed Icelandic bank. Ninety-four percent voted against the proposal, which many saw as rescuing bankers while austerity measures hit hard at working people.

The Iceland government quickly sought to reassure capitalists in Britain and the Netherlands that the debts would be paid.

Icesave, an online bank operated by Landsbanki, collapsed along with its parent bank and two other major Icelandic banks in October 2008. Icesave had attracted foreign deposits by offering “market-beating interest rates,” noted the *Financial Times*, which it sought “to shore up its over-stretched balance sheets.” The nation’s debt is more than 10 times the size of its economy.

The British and Dutch governments reimbursed the roughly 400,000 people from Britain and the Netherlands who had deposits with Icesave. They then demanded that the Icelandic government repay these funds. In December Iceland’s parliament in a 33 to 30 vote agreed to pay London and Amsterdam \$5.3 billion. But in early January President Olafur Grimmson, after receiving petitions with signatures from one-quarter of the population expressing opposition, vetoed the legislation and called for a referendum.

The bill rejected by the voters would
Continued on page 8

‘Militant’, book campaign presents communist response

BY PAUL MAILHOT

Supporters of the *Militant* newspaper begin an eight-week drive March 13 to win new readers and introduce them to the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes. This effort will be combined with a campaign to raise

\$110,000 to keep the paper’s working-class perspective coming out every week. We urge all of our readers to join in both of these campaigns.

The spring drive to gain 2,000 new and returning readers of the *Militant* is a response to the growing numbers of workers, farmers, and youth around the world today who are reacting to the effects of the capitalist economic and social crisis, looking to understand it, and want to fight back.

The *Militant* subscription campaign this spring will be a drive of a different kind that puts sales of the *Workers Power* book at the center of presenting a communist response to the ongoing world capitalist crisis. The book is an essential contribution to the discussion of what way forward for working people today.

As the introduction to the
Continued on page 4



Militant/Naomi Craine

Militant supporter James Harris sells *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* with paper at March 4 protest against education cuts in Los Angeles.

D.C. march to press legalization in face of rise in deportations

BY SETH GALINSKY

As the administration of Barack Obama continues its attacks on undocumented workers, thousands of people from around the country are preparing to demonstrate in Washington, D.C., March 21 to demand legalization of immigrants and an end to deportations.

In a March 5 press release, the Fair Immigration Reform Movement, one of the coalitions backing the march, points out that “the Obama Administration’s shift in emphasis from ‘worker raids’ to ‘paper/desk raids’ has provided a veneer of civility to immigration enforcement.”

“Deportations have increased by more than 60 percent since the Obama Administration took office,” the coalition adds. In 2009 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deported the highest number of

immigrant workers in U.S. history.

While reducing the number of high-profile factory raids, in 2009 ICE tripled the number of immigration audits, which often lead to the firing
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Teamsters go on strike at Philadelphia market

BY BRIAN NEVINS
AND JANET POST

PHILADELPHIA—Members of Teamsters Local 929 struck the Philadelphia Regional Produce Market March 1. According to the union, the company is demanding a new contract with the introduction of health-care contributions, three-tier pay, and eliminating double-time pay on Sunday. The workforce of 250 includes dock workers, forklift drivers, porters, and produce checkers.

Phil Baldwin, a young dockworker, told the *Militant* that the three-tier contract would make it virtually impossible for new workers to make it to the higher pay levels.

The company immediately secured a

court injunction limiting the number of pickets to two, amid media claims the strikers were instigating confrontations with trucks crossing the picket line. But striker Henry Herz told the *Militant* that an incoming car had sideswiped a union member.

“It used to be the norm in this country that you didn’t work Sunday. Now when I go to watch my kids at the ball game I’m half asleep,” said striker John Friesema.

“The average workday is 10 hours but I have worked as much as 18 on Sunday and they want to eliminate the double-time pay,” said Rodney Davies. The new contract will be cutting the regular pay rate, he said, because 30 cents an hour will be taken out for health care the first year of the contract and 60 cents an hour in the last two years.

Danielle, a single mother and one of the few women workers on the docks, said, “Most of the workers have children and are only able to see them on Saturday because of the economy and the hours they need to put in to make ends meet.”

Bernard Zantzler told the *Militant*, “The company is proposing with the new contract that we come in to work Friday morning and once we get here they will decide if they need us. If not, on Fridays, we go home.”



Militant/Janet Post

Teamster strikers are fighting company attempt to impose three-tier contract and higher health-care costs.

Scotland protest opposes school cutbacks



Militant/Tony Hunt

GLASGOW, Scotland—Some 8,000 school teachers, college lecturers, students, and their supporters from all parts of Scotland demonstrated here March 6 to protest budget cuts in education. The largest teachers union in Scotland, the Education Institute for Scotland, organized the action, its first in 15 years, aimed at both the London and Scottish governments.

Caroline Ritchie, a primary school teacher at Cuthbertson School in Glasgow, told the *Militant*, “The cuts are now so bad primary school teachers are buying materials for their pupils out of their own pockets.” The union says there are 2,500 fewer teachers in Scotland than two years ago.

—TONY HUNT

Utah bill would make intentional miscarriage ‘criminal homicide’

BY CINDY JAQUITH

In a new move to brand abortion as “murder,” the Utah state legislature adopted a bill allowing women to be prosecuted for “criminal homicide” if they intentionally induce a miscarriage. The penalty is up to life in prison.

The bill defines legal abortion as a procedure performed by a doctor or under a doctor’s care. But if a woman terminates her pregnancy on her own, that is homicide.

The measure passed by 59-12 in the House and 24-4 in the Senate. But the bill’s chief sponsor, Rep. Carl Wimmer, a former cop, decided to withdraw it and revise it.

A vague passage in the original bill allowed criminal homicide charges for “reckless” behavior on the part of a woman that results in the death of the fetus. It was not spelled out if this included driving habits, or consumption of alcohol or illegal drugs.

Wimmer says he is removing the “reckless” clause but will retain the language making it a homicide if a woman’s “intentional” actions result in the death of a fetus.

In Nebraska hearings took place February 25 on a “fetal pain” bill that would outlaw most abortions after 20 weeks. “It’s at that point, Speaker of the Legislature Mike Flood says, that a fetus begins to sense pain,” the *Omaha World-Herald* reported. The only exception would be to save the life of the woman. The Supreme Court ruling allows abortion up until the fetus reaches “viability,” usually considered to be 24 weeks.

The measure is another salvo against doctors like LeRoy Carhart, who performs late-term abortions in Nebraska and was an associate of Dr. George Tiller, who provided these abortions in Kansas until his murder by an ultrarightist last May.

THE MILITANT

Europe: Workers pay for capitalist crisis

The capitalists are now carrying out an assault on the rights and living standards of workers and farmers in Greece, Spain, Portugal, and Ireland. The ‘Militant’ takes the side of working people.

Don’t miss a single issue!



Aspasia Kanellou

February 24 march in Athens during strike against government austerity plan.

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Students and workers protest N.Y. transit cuts

BY SETH GALINSKY

NEW YORK—Hundreds of students and workers packed hearings in New York City's five boroughs to oppose cuts in bus and subway service and the elimination of free passes for students. The Transport Workers Union held a rally outside the Manhattan hearing March 4 to oppose the measures.

At the Manhattan hearing small groups of high school students from around the city joined the line of people waiting to enter and chanted against the cuts on their way in.

"Our education is important to us and we really care about it," Shakeisha Cush, 16, told the *Militant*. "I have to ride the subway from Brooklyn to Manhattan to get to school. The free MetroCard is necessary and I will fight for it."

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA), which runs New York City's subways, buses, and trains, distributed a 120-page booklet detailing the "service reductions." The MTA claims the cuts are needed to reduce a budget deficit of \$383 million this year and another \$297 million projected in 2011.

The transit agency proposals include eliminating or reducing service on dozens of bus lines, reducing train and bus service at night and on weekends, cutting back on van services for the disabled, and rapidly phasing out free passes for high school, middle school, and elementary school students.

The MTA said it would lay off 450 station agents. This is on top of the "re-assignment" of 300 station agents last year. Transit officials said that agents who retired would not be replaced, further cutting the workforce through attrition.

It was standing room only in the 800-

seat auditorium during the Manhattan hearing on the cuts.

"You don't see the faces of the people who will be affected by the cuts, who live paycheck to paycheck," Priscila Ruiz, 16, a student at Aquinas High School in the Bronx, told MTA officials who listened impassively to her comments as the crowd cheered. "What about the people who work late shifts, how are they supposed to get home? You don't think about their faces, all you see is money."

Several disabled riders took the floor and opposed the changes in "Access-a-Ride," a door-to-door van service. The MTA proposes providing the service to and from bus and subway stops instead. "Access-a-Ride is our lifeline," Bee Simpson told the Bronx MTA hearing.

While the MTA chiefs plan reductions in transport services working people need the most, cutting payments to wealthy bondholders is off the table. The MTA board of directors considers payments on the agency's \$26.8 billion debt a "fixed cost." In 2010 they project paying out a whopping \$1.9 billion for interest and principal on the debt, five times more than the current budget deficit.

But the agency tops and capitalist rulers in New York are quick to blame transit workers for service cuts. The MTA attempted to block previously agreed upon wage hikes, saying the increases would widen the budget deficit.

"The cuts affect all of us," track worker Adjul Jalil said in an interview at the Transport Workers Union protest rally in Manhattan. "The union should fight this with any means at its disposal."

Brian Williams contributed to this article



Roberto Mercado

Students join Transport Workers Union rally March 4 outside Manhattan hearing on proposed cuts in bus and subway service and elimination of free passes for students.

'We can't be passive' about attacks on public education

BY BILL ARTH AND WENDY LYONS

LOS ANGELES—More than 2,000 people marched through downtown Los Angeles March 4 to protest cuts in funding to public education. There were rallies of 2,000 at California State Long Beach and 500 at the University of California, Los Angeles, and smaller rallies at the Cal State Los Angeles and Dominguez Hills campuses. Walkouts were reported at six high schools here.

Lindsay Cozart told the *Militant* she was taking a semester off from college and working to save money to go back to school. "They should march from one end of the city to the other. This is affecting the entire state," she said.

Mario Medina, a garment worker, is taking evening English classes at the Jefferson adult public school. He said most of the teachers and students there joined the protest. "They want to close the adult school," he said. "Right now

we don't pay for the classes. They want to open up new programs that you have to pay for. It's very important for workers to have the school. We're trying to learn the language."

"We're here because things are getting worse," said Jose Cebrian, a student at Belmont High. "Janitors are getting laid off, football is cut back, and after-school programs are being cut." He said that some classes have 50 students. They can only rarely take textbooks home and their gym class is 60 people.

"This protest is a call out to let people know we can't be passive," said Jose Hernandez, a Cal State Fullerton student. "I'm for restructuring the whole education system from the bottom up so we are not just trained to be robots in a capitalist society." Referring to cutbacks to humanities classes, he added, "They want a society with no heart, that just produces."

Thousands demonstrate in California

Continued from front page

English classes, there are more than 30," Jeser Villanueva, a student at Westmoor High School in Daly City told the *Militant*.

Iya Vargas, a student at California State University, East Bay, pointed out that students from working-class families are hit the hardest by soaring tuitions and growing student debts. "I have a friend who is dependent on financial aid," she said. "The interest keeps going up. And she doesn't get the aid in time to sign up for courses she needs."

Students from San Francisco State carried a giant puppet of a human skeleton wearing a graduation cap. "It's a student who's still paying off his student loans, even after he's dead," one said.

The rally was organized by teachers' unions in the Bay Area, the San Francisco Community College District Federation of Teachers, Bay Area chapters of the California Faculty Association, San Francisco Labor Council, and student groups.

Unionists who are school bus drivers, school secretaries, librarians and janitors participated. A cheer went up when hotel workers, who are fighting health-care cuts, were introduced.

Protests were held on dozens of college campuses. Students at the City College

of San Francisco rallied around a large banner demanding: "No cuts! Restore summer classes, Restore library hours, No lay-offs/furloughs, Restore student services, Restore all cut classes."

Demonstrators at Laney College in Oakland were joined by students from nearby high schools. They marched to the Oakland Civic Center where they met up with hundreds of University of California, Berkeley, students, swelling the crowd to more than 1,000. A similar size rally, attended by students from UC Davis, Sacramento State, and other schools, took place on the steps of the state capitol in Sacramento.

On March 1, Black students at UC Berkeley organized a silent demonstration of 200 students protesting the recent hanging of a noose at UC San Diego and a racist off-campus party, as well as racist incidents on the Berkeley campus.

As a result of the elimination of affirmative action programs after the passage of Proposition 209 in 1996, today only 3.5 percent of students at Berkeley are Black. The students delivered a letter to UC Berkeley chancellor Robert Birgeneau demanding action to recruit more Black students and faculty.

On March 5, 15,000 San Francisco city workers—librarians, gardeners,

janitors, clerks, secretaries, and others—received layoff notices stipulating that most will be rehired within two weeks to work 37.5 hours a week, instead of the current 40.

Mayor Gavin Newsom says this is necessary to narrow a city budget deficit of \$522 million. Republican and Democratic party politicians claim the statewide education cuts are needed to close a \$20 billion state budget deficit.

A front-page headline in the March 7 *San Francisco Chronicle* proclaimed: "Student protests vs. fiscal reality, Lawmakers boxed in by \$20 billion deficit." The article argues that if slashes are not made in education, then deeper cuts will have to be made in care for the elderly and other social services.

This is part of a campaign in the big-business media aimed at discouraging action against the layoffs and cuts, arguing it's fruitless, and even selfish for students and the labor movement to oppose the attacks.

Momentum is building for a march on Sacramento March 22 to protest "Skyrocketing fees, fewer class offerings, and devastating cuts to crucial student services." An estimated 20,000 students will be turned away next fall if the cuts at community colleges remain in place.

Recommended reading

The working class and the transformation of learning

by Jack Barnes

"Until society is reorganized so that education is a human activity from the time we are very young until the time we die, there will be no education worthy of working, creating humanity." \$3

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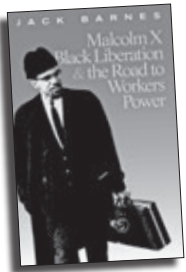
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CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Elections in Iraq, the U.S.-led Offensive in Afghanistan, and the Fight to Open Political Space for Working People. Speaker: Eric Simpson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 20. Dinner, 5:30 p.m.; program, 6:30 p.m. 5482 Mission St. Tel.: (415) 584-2135.



Sell the book on ‘workers power’

BY BEN JOYCE

Supporters of the *Militant* are campaigning to get the new book by Jack Barnes, *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, into the hands of as many workers, farmers, youth, and others as possible.

“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat,” writes Barnes in the introduction. Released in January, the book presents the historic vanguard place and weight of workers who are Black in the fight against all forms of capitalist exploitation and oppression over several generations.

The book draws the lessons of a century and a half of class struggle and the political legacy of the highest-caliber proletarian leadership, from the October 1917 revolution in Russia to the Cuban Revolution. It explains why racism, violence, and exploitation that are endemic to the capitalist system can only be uprooted with the conquest and exercise of state power by the working-class vanguard.

Most importantly, it addresses the question of what is to be done and what kind of movement has to be built to accomplish this historic task.

At the center of the spring campaign to win new readers of the *Militant* will be the effort by the paper’s supporters to widely distribute this book. To help boost this campaign the *Militant* has printed thousands of additional copies of the feature supplement, first printed in October 2009, which contains the author’s introduction and several pages of photos from *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*. This will be an effective tool for *Militant* supporters in their efforts to sell the book.

The *Militant* supplement is available in English, French, and Spanish.

It can be purchased in bundles for just 10 cents each, with a cover price of 50 cents. Order your bundle today by contacting us at themilitant.business@mac.com or (212) 244-4899.

Although the campaign begins March 13, many have already been getting the book out to coworkers, friends, and others over recent weeks. Following are reports from our readers.

New Jersey

I’ve sold 10 copies of the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* at my workplace. Nine were sold with subscriptions to the *Militant*.

Most of the sales have been to coworkers who have bought communist literature in the past or have read the *Militant* before. Showing them the book was enough to make the sale, which is good because half the sales were to coworkers on other shifts. The photo inserts are really attractive and when you don’t have much time to talk, they do the talking for you.

One coworker, John, encouraged me to post a flyer about the book (I did post one from the Pathfinder Web site in the cafeterias). That resulted in someone approaching me. John even commented on his Facebook page about the book.

One of the two books that were sold to coworkers who had not previously gotten literature from me was to a Black coworker who was talking about a vacation he took in Nicaragua. We were in a class renewing our fork-lift licenses and the discussion got on to the exploitation of the Third World. I showed him the book the next day. He bought it right away.

The book sells itself. Workers who are feeling the pressures of the huge increase in productivity (we’re all

Seattle students march against tuition hikes



Militant/Jeanne FitzMaurice

SEATTLE—Some 1,000 students protested tuition hikes and budget cuts March 4 at the University of Washington. Tuition has gone up 14 percent and is expected to go up 14 percent again next year.

—JEANNE FITZMAURICE

working much harder) appreciate the fightback this book represents.

—Richard Ariza

New Jersey

I am thrilled to have introduced the *Militant* to three new readers at work who also bought the *Workers Power* book. One coworker initially only wanted the paper but after he read an excerpt in it from the book, he asked the next day if he could still buy that title. He tore through it, finished it, and bought a couple of other Pathfinder titles.

—Jane Harris

New York

Myself and another *Militant* supporter were on the subway in New York when we found ourselves in the middle of an animated discussion among high school debate team members who had just won a tournament. They were discussing why Malcolm X left the Nation of Islam.

We took out a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* and began explaining what the book is about. Everyone within earshot was straining to hear and to look at the book. Several students entered the name of the book in

their Blackberries. One student said, “Malcolm was a Muslim. I’m a Muslim too, and I’m a socialist. I want to know how workers can run society.”

—Rachele Fruit

San Francisco

As students throughout California mobilized March 4 against funding cuts to public education, *Militant* supporters joined in the actions. In San Francisco, 15 copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* were sold to participants along with about 150 copies of the paper and supplement, and two subscriptions.

—Eric Simpson

Seattle

Those campaigning with the book in Seattle have found new openings to use the feature supplement with the author’s introduction. We realized we hadn’t really been using the French language supplement, as we had ordered only 10. We found the other day during a sale to students at a nearby campus that by offering the supplement in all three languages we will sell it. One Italian student bought the supplement in English and French, his second and third languages.

—Mary Martin

‘Militant’, book campaign

Militant Fund drive March 13–May 12, 2010

Country	Quota
UNITED STATES	
Atlanta	\$7,800
Boston	\$3,500
Chicago	\$9,600
Des Moines, IA	\$2,500
Houston	\$2,500
Los Angeles	\$8,700
Miami	\$3,000
New York	\$19,000
Philadelphia	\$3,700
San Francisco	\$14,000
Seattle	\$8,000
Twin Cities, MN	\$7,000
Washington, D.C.	\$6,500
Total U.S.	\$95,800
Canada	\$6,650
New Zealand	\$3,000
Australia	\$1,500
UNITED KINGDOM	
Edinburgh	\$300
London	\$750
Total U.K.	\$1,050
Sweden	\$500
International Total	\$108,500

Continued from front page

book explains, “Only the conquest, and exercise, of state power by the working class and expropriation of finance capital can lay the foundations for a world based not on exploitation, violence, racial discrimination, class-based pecking orders, and dog-eat-dog competition, but on solidarity among working people that encourages the creativity and recognition of the worth of every individual, regardless of sex, national origin, or skin color. A socialist world.”

The first round of discussions by supporters of the *Militant* internationally resulted in initial goals totaling 1,800 new subscriptions for the spring campaign, 200 short of the projected goal of 2,000. In order to close the gap, each area has pledged to rediscuss their quotas this week. The chart presenting the local goals will be published in next week’s issue of the *Militant*, along with the first few days of sales results of subscriptions and *Workers Power* books.

The *Militant* fund drive chart appears in this issue. Local areas have already pledged near to the \$110,000 goal, indicating a confident start to the fund-raising campaign.

War in Afghanistan

Continued from front page

in 2001, 2007, and March 2009. This time Washington plans to hold the 80-square-mile farming community of 80,000 people with a force of more than 2,000 U.S. marines, along with 1,000 Afghan soldiers and a comparable Afghan police force.

Many local residents are weary of or oppose the foreign troop presence, while others openly back the new authority. A major challenge for Washington and the Afghan government remains convincing the local population that the Taliban will not return and that they won’t be worse off under the authority of the U.S.-backed central government.

Afghan army soldiers looted the market in Marjah after it was taken by U.S. marines, according to the *New York Times*. The soldiers’ reputation for extortion, theft, and brutality is exceeded by that of the Afghan police. Local residents recently told *Times* reporter C.J. Chivers that they supported the U.S. troops. “But if you bring the cops,” they said, “we will

fight you till death.”

Meanwhile, the Pakistani government has, for the first time, arrested a number of key leaders of the Afghan Taliban and, over the last few weeks, has conducted military operations against al-Qaeda and Taliban strongholds in several tribal agencies along the Afghan border.

In exchange for such cooperation, Washington is increasing military aid to Pakistan, including some 1,000 laser-guided bomb kits, surveillance drones, and F-16 fighter jets. Direct U.S. military aid to Pakistan is set to nearly double in 2011 to \$1.2 billion.

The arming of Pakistan is of concern to its more powerful rival to the east. New Delhi has dramatically stepped up its weapon purchases from Russia, the United States, and Israel.

While the two sides—both nuclear powers—have recently begun foreign-minister level talks, they have major unresolved conflicts and are gripped in a contest for influence in Afghanistan.

Puerto Rico: Why independence is a necessity

Printed below is an excerpt from Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity by Rafael Cancel Miranda, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for March. Cancel Miranda is one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists who spent more than a quarter century in U.S. prisons following armed protests they carried out in Washington against colonial rule. Freed from prison in 1979 through an international defense campaign, Cancel Miranda continues to speak out around the world for his country's independence and the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners still held in U.S. jails today. Copyright © 1998 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

BY RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA

We have to reach out to the greatest number of our people with the truth and the need for independence. Independence is not simply a nice ideal. It is a necessity.

We have to reach the new generations, so they will continue the struggle until the time comes when different forces in the world come together and strengthen our struggle. We are part of the world, and what happens all over the world affects our country.

The United States uses our young



Above, Alvin Couto; Inset, Roberto Mercado
Demonstrators in San Juan, Puerto Rico, protest layoffs of government workers and other austerity measures in the U.S. colony last April. Inset, Rafael Cancel Miranda, Puerto Rican independence fighter, speaking at meeting in New York City, Jan. 26, 2008.

people as cannon fodder in their wars. In the Vietnam War, Puerto Rico had a disproportionately high number of casualties relative to its population compared to the United States. The same thing happened in the Korean War.

They sent us to kill Dominicans in the Dominican Republic in 1965. When they invaded Panama in 1989, they sent us to kill Panamanians, who are our brothers and sisters.

Before the [1991] Gulf War, nobody here knew who Saddam Hussein was. But in one week they got the Puerto Rican people to hate Saddam Hussein, through their control of the media, and then everyone was saying that Saddam was the devil.

I asked on the radio the other day, "What are Puerto Ricans doing in Bosnia?" If Rockefeller wants to send his sons to fight in Bosnia, let him do it. But he's not going to send his sons to Bosnia. He's going to send your sons, the sons of John Doe and Mary Jane.

So young people are affected by this colonial reality.

We have to show workers why independence is in their interests as workers: so they can be the owners of their country and their factories, so they can be the owners of what they produce. So that everything doesn't end up in the coffers of Wall Street. So that it stays here for their development.



We have to explain what annexation would mean. If Puerto Rico were to be made a state, they would treat us exactly like they treat our communities in New York, Connecticut, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

When I got out of prison in 1979, I told my people from the beginning that we're going to end up on reservations like the Indians if we're not an independent country. It's happening. I could take you to housing projects, in nearby Mayagüez, where thousands of Puerto Rican families live, and which have been turned into reservations. They have them fenced in and access is controlled by the police and the National Guard. You have to identify yourself to enter and leave your home. They search your car as if you were in prison.

As Pedro Albizu Campos¹ said sixty years ago, if we don't free ourselves, we will go from being masters to being serfs, from being owners to being squatters. And right now we Puerto Ricans are squatters in our own country. Others are in charge, not us.

1. Pedro Albizu Campos (1891–1965) was the central leader of the Nationalist Party and the independence movement in Puerto Rico from the 1930s through the 1950s. He spent many years in U.S. prisons for his anti-imperialist activities.

Who controls the Customs in Puerto Rico? The U.S. does. They control our commerce, both foreign and domestic trade. Who controls immigration? The U.S. does. To leave Puerto Rico for another country, we must ask permission from the U.S. State Department. Even this little colonial governor, Rosselló, has to ask their permission.

It is for the same reasons that we Nationalists do not believe in plebiscites, because the U.S. controls the colonial elections. They use elections to cover up our colonial status and pretend there is democracy. But they control everything here, even the military. They are occupying our country militarily. Under these conditions—when you have a gun aimed at your head, and when they control your life socially, politically, and economically—there can be no free vote.

We Nationalists say: first, transfer all powers to the Puerto Rican people. Demilitarize our country. Remove all U.S. military bases and repressive agencies from Puerto Rico, and then we'll decide. Then we can talk.

Our people enjoyed a few months of freedom during the transfer of power between Spain and the United States. In 1897 we won a measure of autonomy, after many years of struggle. We had our own postage stamps, our own Puerto Rican currency, our own parliament, our own Customs. We had control over our own foreign trade; we sold to whom-ever we wished. When the U.S. invaded in 1898, that came to an end.²

2. In 1897 the Spanish colonial government granted Puerto Rico broad autonomous powers. This concession was a result of the Cuban war for independence that had begun two years earlier, in which the Spanish forces had been militarily defeated by the Cuban liberation army. The Cuban Revolutionary Party, which led the struggle in Cuba, had a Puerto Rico section, and the pro-autonomy liberals in Puerto Rico threatened to ally themselves with the revolutionaries if greater autonomy was not granted. This situation ended a few months later, however, when Washington declared war on its Spanish rival in April 1898 in order to seize Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam for its own imperialist interests.

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Iraq: U.S. troop reduction scheduled to start in May

Iraqi gov't conducts 2nd parliamentary election

BY DOUG NELSON

March 8—Following the parliamentary elections in Iraq, Gen. Ray Odierno, top U.S. general in the country, said Washington plans to reduce its troop presence there beginning in May.

There are 96,000 U.S. troops in Iraq. The administration of Barack Obama says it intends to scale that down to 50,000 by September. “Unless there’s a catastrophic event, we don’t see that changing,” Odierno told reporters a day after the elections.

The reduction is connected to Washington’s plans to further increase its troops in Afghanistan from 75,000 to 98,000 by the end of the year. It also reflects an assessment that, seven years after its invasion, Washington has laid the basis for furthering its interests in Iraq and the broader region with fewer soldiers.

The timing and scope of a U.S. troop reduction, however, will hinge in part on the outcome of the elections and the struggle among competing bourgeois forces for position in a coalition government that will ensue. This process lasted five months following the last parliamentary elections in 2005.

On election day, a terrorist bombing killed 25 in Baghdad, while smaller attacks throughout the country killed 13 others and wounded more than 80. But this violence, designed to intimidate the population and disrupt the election, appeared to have a limited effect on voter

turnout.

Initial figures show 62 percent of eligible voters cast ballots. The Kurdish areas in the north saw the highest turnout, reported at 80 percent. Nationwide, turnout was lower than during the country’s last parliamentary election in 2005. But it was much higher this time in the western Sunni Arab areas where bourgeois forces—many of whom had been part of the insurgency in alliance with al-Qaeda before reversing course and backing Washington—encouraged people to vote in order to gain greater influence in the government.

Under the regime of Saddam Hussein, the Sunni ruling class dominated the government, but was marginalized following its overthrow.

The majority of the country is Shiite Arab. Sunni Arabs comprise roughly 20 percent of the population, and the Kurds, an oppressed nationality in the



Reuters/Stringer Iraq

Kurdish residents of Kirkuk, in northern Iraq, celebrate after parliamentary voting March 7.

region, somewhere between 15 percent and 20 percent.

While election results are not yet in, no party coalition is expected to win a majority. There are three major contending coalitions, along with several others that are expected to win seats.

The Iraqi National Alliance, a Shiite religious party coalition closely allied with Tehran, lost some ground in last

year’s provincial elections. The coalition is dominated by the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, whose Iranian-trained Badr Brigades militia has been incorporated into the Iraqi army and represents part of its base of power.

The party supports autonomy for the majority-Shiite oil-rich south and has worked to curb the power of Sunni

Continued on page 8

Conference held on Chinese labor in Australia

BY LINDA HARRIS

AND BOB AIKEN

CAIRNS, Australia—Some 50 people attended the “Rediscovered Past: Valuing Chinese Roles across the North” conference here February 13–14. It was the third such conference organized by Chinese Heritage in Northern Australia.

Most of those attending the gathering

were from Queensland—many of them either of Chinese heritage or researchers in the history of the Chinese in Australia.

Presentations at the conference explained some of the little-known history of the Chinese in Northern Australia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The final panel discussed the impact of anti-Chinese legislation introduced in Queensland from the Aliens Act of 1861 onwards—part of what became known as the White Australia Policy.

Chinese immigrants played a significant role in mining, farming, and commerce. From the end of the 1840s they were brought into Queensland as indentured laborers, when convict labor from Britain was ending. They worked on the big cattle and sheep stations as shearers, cooks, and stockmen. Many established ties with Aboriginal workers, while there was also conflict between the two nationalities.

Laws were introduced aimed at block-

ing the development of economic and social relations between Aborigines and Chinese. The white colonial government was carrying out brutal suppression of Aboriginal resistance at this time.

The largest numbers of Chinese came during the gold rushes from the 1860s through 1880s. In 1877, the 17,000 Chinese in north Queensland outnumbered the 7,000 white settlers. But by 1895, due to the reactionary White Australia Policy, there were only 2,800 Chinese in the region compared to 12,000 white settlers.

Throughout the conference a small display of *Our History Is Still Being Written: The Story of Three Chinese-Cuban Generals in the Cuban Revolution*, published by Pathfinder, drew steady interest. Many expressed surprise that there was a significant Chinese presence in Cuba.

Kevin Wong Hoy, president of Chinese Heritage in Northern Australia, encouraged participants to pick up a copy of the book and three were sold.

Democrats, Republicans quietly renew antiworker Patriot Act

BY CINDY JAQUITH

President Barack Obama and the U.S. Congress have quietly renewed the Patriot Act, adopted in 2001 to remove many of the restraints that had been placed on U.S. secret police operations in the 1970s. The Senate voted to renew the law for one year by voice vote with no debate February 24 and the House approved it the next day.

Adopted shortly after the Sept. 11, 2001, attack on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the Patriot Act greatly expanded the powers of the FBI and other intelligence agencies to conduct spying and disruption operations against individuals and organizations, carry out arbitrary search and seizures, and jail immigrants virtually indefinitely without charges.

The act grants greater authority to the cops to eavesdrop on phone, e-mail, and Internet communications, supervised by a court issuing secret orders. The law’s “roving wiretap” provision allows the FBI to place a wiretap on someone’s phone without having to identify who the person is or why that individual should be under surveillance. Police are allowed under the act to search someone’s home without their knowledge.

The act allows the attorney general to jail an immigrant accused of “terrorism” for up to six months without charges. The person can be deported without presenting evidence. There are stiff penalties for anyone convicted of “harboring terrorists” or raising funds for organizations the U.S. gov-

ernment considers terrorist.

The “library records” provision of the law makes it easier for the FBI to request permission to spy on a person’s private information, including what books they check out from the library. The snoops have to prove only that the information they are seeking is “relevant” to an investigation. The target of the surveillance need not even be a suspect.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



March 22, 1985

While the U.S. government continues to deepen its war in Central America, it is also stepping up imperialist aggression in the Mideast. Two U.S. warships are steaming toward Lebanon to allegedly evacuate U.S. embassy personnel if threatened by Lebanese “extremists.”

The U.S. government seeks to crush the Palestinian national liberation movement and bolster proimperialist Arab regimes. The U.S. rulers are relying on the Israeli regime, their imperialist ally in the region, to do the job.

The U.S. government is helping to foot the bill for the Israeli regime’s aggression because the U.S. rulers share the same goals. Israeli troops invaded Lebanon in 1982 to try to crush the Palestine Liberation Organization and set up a stable proimperialist regime.



March 21, 1960

City and state officials have imposed a regime close to martial law upon the Negroes of Montgomery, Alabama, who now risk life and limb if they attempt to assemble, petition, or peacefully demonstrate. In addition to city and state police, gangs of deputized horsemen and Ku Klux elements wearing Civil Defense insignia are terrorizing Negroes.

The actions of the authorities and the white-supremacist vigilantes in Alabama are so ominous that Roy Wilkins, head of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, asked the White House to act to avert a possible “massacre” of Negroes.

In Orangeburg, South Carolina, a demonstration by 1,000 students from South Carolina State and Claflin College was met with tear gas and fire hoses.



March 23, 1935

The imminence of the Second World War was vividly demonstrated last Saturday by the action of Hitler Germany when she tore up the Treaty of Versailles and threw it in the faces of the other European powers. Henceforth, announced the Nazi leader, compulsory military service will be introduced in Germany and the Third Reich will enter openly into the race for arms.

This announcement came at the end of a week filled with talk—and acts—for rearmament. And it came as no surprise to the responsible—or to be more exact irresponsible—rulers of France, Italy, Great Britain, and the United States.

Thus less than seventeen years after the end of the “war to end war,” preparations for the second World War are now publicly proclaimed.

Bolshevik Revolution and U.S. Black struggle

The following is the ninth in a series of excerpts the Militant is running from Pathfinder Press's latest book, *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. We encourage our readers to study and discuss the book. This excerpt is the last part of a chapter titled, "Everything New and Progressive Came from the Revolution of 1917," a piece by James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the communist movement in the United States." Sub-headings are by the Militant.

BY JAMES P. CANNON

Everything new and progressive on the Negro question came from Moscow, after the revolution of 1917, and as a result of the revolution—not only for the American communists who responded directly, but for all others concerned with the question.

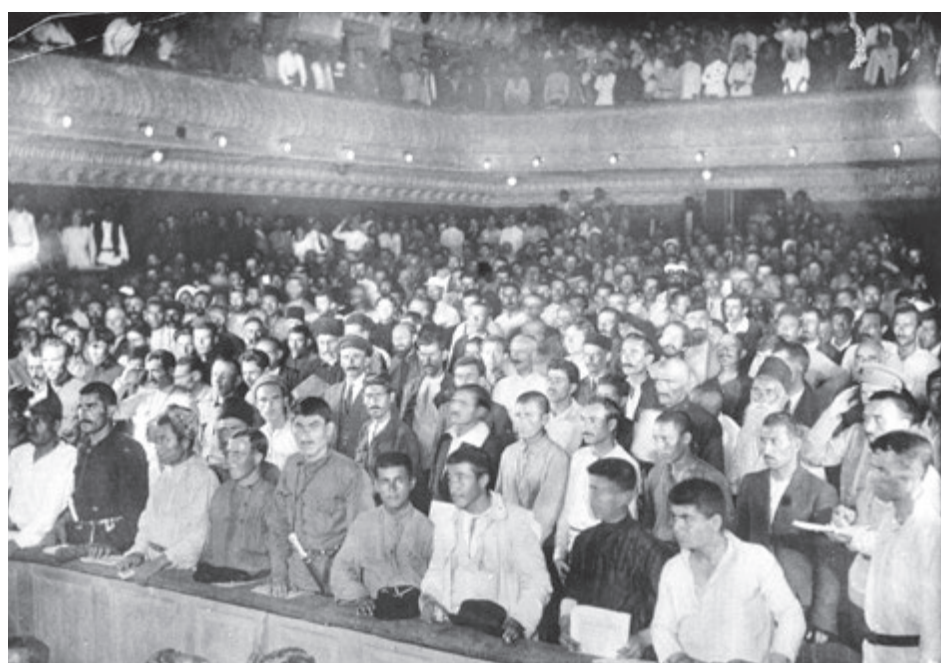
By themselves, the American communists never thought of anything new or different from the traditional position of American radicalism on the Negro question. . . . The simplistic formula that the Negro problem was merely economic, a part of the capital-labor problem, never struck fire among the Negroes—who knew better even if they didn't say so; they had to live with brutal discrimination every day and every hour.

There was nothing subtle or concealed about this discrimination. Everybody knew that the Negro was getting the worst of it at every turn, but hardly anybody cared about it or wanted to do anything to try to moderate or change it. The 90 percent white majority of American society, including its working-class sector, North as well as

South, was saturated with prejudice against the Negro; and the socialist movement reflected this prejudice to a considerable extent—even though, in deference to the ideal of human brotherhood, the socialist attitude was muted and took the form of evasion. The old theory of American radicalism turned out in practice to be a formula for inaction on the Negro front, and—incidentally—a convenient shield for the dormant racial prejudices of the white radicals themselves.

The Russian intervention changed all that, and changed it drastically, and for the better. Even before the First World War and the Russian Revolution, Lenin and the Bolsheviks were distinguished from all other tendencies in the international socialist and labor movement by their concern with the problems of oppressed nations and national minorities, and affirmative support of their struggles for freedom, independence, and the right of self-determination. The Bolsheviks gave this support to all "people without equal rights" sincerely and earnestly, but there was nothing "philanthropic" about it. They also recognized the great revolutionary potential in the situation of oppressed peoples and nations, and saw them as important allies of the international working class in the revolutionary struggle against capitalism.

After November 1917 this new doctrine—with special emphasis on the Negroes—began to be transmitted to the American communist movement with the authority of the Russian Revolution behind it. The Russians in the Comintern started on the American communists with the harsh, insistent demand that they shake off their own unspoken prejudices, pay attention to



New Soviet workers and peasants republic recognized right to self-determination of oppressed nations. Communist International convened First Congress of Peoples of the East, in Baku, Azerbaijan, September 1920. Above, some of 2,000 delegates representing workers and peasants of more than two dozen peoples of Asia. Bolshevik stand on oppressed nations had profound impact on U.S. communist movement.

the special problems and grievances of the American Negroes, go to work among them, and champion their cause, including among whites.

It took time for the Americans, raised in a different tradition, to assimilate the new Leninist doctrine. But the Russians followed up year after year, piling up the arguments and increasing the pressure on the American communists until they finally learned and changed, and went to work in earnest. And the change in the attitude of the American communists, gradually effected in the twenties, was to exert a profound influence in far wider circles in the later years.

*

The Communist Party's break with the traditional position of American radicalism on the Negro question coincided with profound changes which had been taking place among the Negroes themselves. The large-scale migration from the agricultural regions of the South to the industrial centers of the North was greatly accelerated during the First World War, and con-

tinued in the succeeding years.¹ This brought some improvement in their conditions of life over what they had known in the Deep South, but not enough to compensate for the disappointment of being herded into ghettos and still subjected to discrimination on every side.

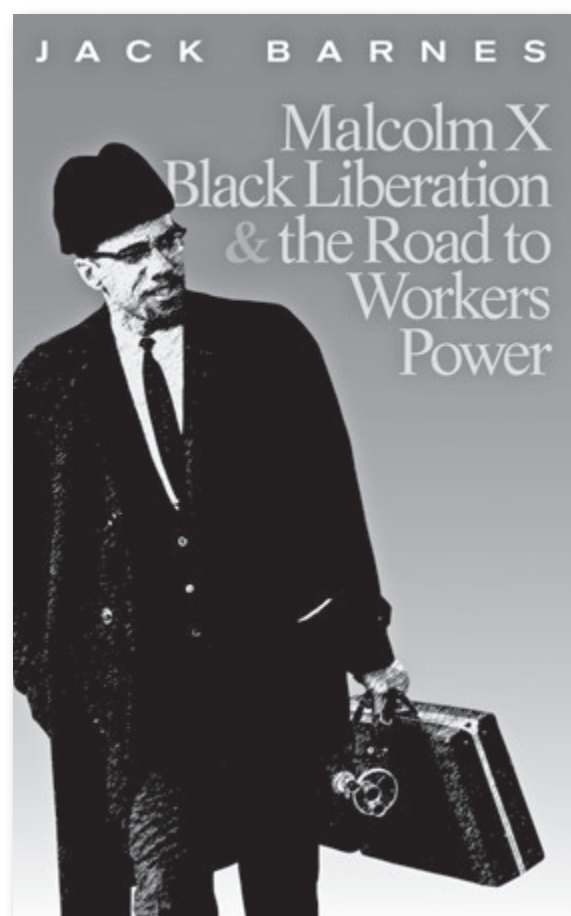
The Negro movement, such as it was at the time, patriotically supported the First World War "to make the world safe for democracy"; and 400,000 Negroes served in the armed forces. They came home looking for a little democratic payoff for themselves, but couldn't find much anywhere. Their new spirit of self-assertion was answered by a mounting score of lynchings and a string of "race riots" across the country, North as well as South.²

All this taken together—the hopes and the disappointments, the new spirit of self-assertion and the savage reprisals—contributed to the emergence of a new Negro movement in the making. Breaking sharply with the Booker T. Washington tradition of accommodation³ to a position of inferiority in a white man's world, a new generation of Negroes began to press their demand for equality. . . .

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power

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By Jack Barnes



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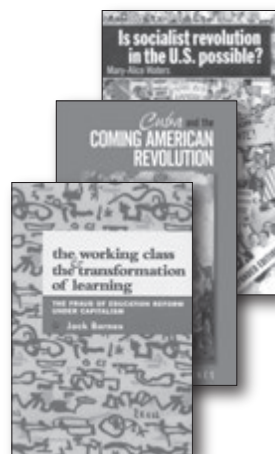
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1. Ninety percent of U.S. Blacks lived in the South in 1910. By 1930, 79 percent of Blacks lived in the South, the big majority of them still in rural areas and small towns. As of 2002, some 55 percent of Blacks lived in the South, with less than 13 percent of them located in rural areas.
2. In 1919, with millions of demobilized soldiers vying for hard-to-come-by jobs, there were racist riots against African Americans in Chicago and some twenty-four other U.S. cities, from Omaha, Nebraska, to Knoxville, Tennessee, from Washington, D.C., to Bogalusa, Louisiana. There was a sharp rise in lynchings throughout the South. Two years later, from May 31 to June 1, 1921, racist mobs in Tulsa, Oklahoma, rioted against African Americans, demolishing the thirty-five-square block Black community, destroying more than 1,200 houses, and killing an estimated one hundred to three hundred people. Heavily outnumbered, Blacks—many of them World War I veterans—organized to defend themselves as best they could.
3. Booker T. Washington (1856–1915) opposed any mass struggle for Black rights, counterposing to it the perspective of accommodation with Jim Crow while working for vocational training and self-improvement.

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Defend social gains, workers' unity

From Sacramento, California, to Albany, New York, the capitalist rulers have put public education on the chopping block, laying off teachers, increasing the size of classes, terminating after-school sports, cutting out English classes for immigrant workers. College students face a lifetime of paying off debt. The example of thousands of students, teachers, and other workers who demonstrated in California March 4 to protest these assaults should be emulated across the country.

The attacks on education are part of the attempt by the employers and their government to maintain their profit rates by cutting wages, slashing social services, and making fewer workers produce more and faster. Democratic and Republican Party politicians claim they're "boxed in" by deficits and have "no choice" but to cut vital services and make "hard choices." The capitalist rulers try to get us to blame fellow workers, including teachers, for earning "too much" money or receiving too "generous" benefits.

They never talk about the capitalist bondholders who rake in trillions every year. They are paid on time and in full—always. Amidst severe cuts in the New York City public transit system, for example, the gov-

ernment will pay out \$1.9 billion for interest and principal on the debt to bondholders in 2010. That money could pay off the transit "deficit" five times over.

As Jack Barnes points out in the new book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*, "Working people have a vital stake not only in defending the social wage we've fought for and won, but above all in building a mass social and political movement of the working class *to extend these conquests as universal rights*—not means-tested charity—for all. Through our labor, the working class, in this country and worldwide, produces more than enough wealth to provide education, health care, housing, and retirement to every human being on earth, for a lifetime."

We urge our readers to join in the protests against the attacks on workers rights and standard of living. The March 21 demonstrations in Washington, D.C., and other cities for legalization of immigrants and an end to deportations are part of this fight. The actions are winning labor support and are one important opportunity to answer the employers' attempts to pit working people against each other by scapegoating immigrant workers for the high rate of unemployment and underemployment today.

March 21 action for immigrant rights

Continued from front page

of workers who can't present proof of legal residency in the United States.

By claiming they are focusing on deporting criminals, U.S. officials seek to scapegoat immigrants and foster divisions among immigrant workers. In a three-day operation at the end of February, ICE agents arrested 284 immigrants in Texas. ICE said more than half have "violent criminal histories."

Washington is expanding the "Secure Communities" program, which aims by 2012 to check the fingerprints of every person held in federal, state, and local jails against a Department of Homeland Security database.

ICE has continued the rapid expansion of E-verify, which allows bosses to check the immigration and work status of current and potential employees through the Internet, making it more difficult for workers without papers to obtain jobs.

The U.S. government has also deepened militarization of the U.S.-Mexico border. There are now more than 20,000 armed agents stationed there.

The purpose of these measures, promoted by both the Democratic and Republican parties, is not to stop the flow of immigrant labor, which U.S. employers need to bolster their profits and compete against businesses from other countries, but

to control it. Their anti-immigrant policies are used to divide working people and drive down the value of their labor power.

The March 21 demonstration provides an opportunity for working people, union activists, and students to oppose these anti-immigrant and anti-worker measures.

Among groups sponsoring the demonstration are several immigration reform coalitions, the AFL-CIO union federation, Service Employees International Union (SEIU), United Food and Commercial Workers union, UNITE HERE, U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the National Council of Churches.

Eugenio Villasante, a spokesperson for SEIU Local 32BJ, told the *Militant* the union members are "very motivated" to join the march. "Many of our members are immigrants and everyone knows someone who has been deported," he said. "It's a wrong policy."

Laborers locals 10, 78, and 79, which organize construction workers in the New York City region, will be participating in the march. The Workplace Project, an immigrant rights group that works with day laborers on Long Island, is organizing a bus to Washington along with a contingent that will walk to the demonstration from Hempstead, New York, starting March 12.

In Salinas, California, the United Farm Workers will also hold an immigration rights action March 21.

Luis Gutiérrez, U.S. congressman from Illinois, will be the featured speaker at a Houston rally March 13 that is part of promoting the March 21 actions.

Gutiérrez has introduced a "comprehensive immigration reform" in the House of Representatives that is similar to proposals that Obama has raised. The bill is presented by some Democratic Party politicians and union officials as a "road to citizenship" and a way to "fix the broken immigration system."

The bill does not guarantee legalizing undocumented workers or an end to deportations. It calls for stepped-up enforcement of immigration laws and the creation of a "Southern Border Security Task Force." It would create a nationwide "employment verification system" to aid bosses in weeding out undocumented workers.

Under the section "Earned legalization program for the undocumented," the bill proposes granting a six-year "conditional nonimmigrant status" to undocumented immigrants.

Any immigrant applying for legal status has to undergo "complete criminal and security background checks" and pay a \$500 fine. Immigrants who qualify must wait for six years after the law takes effect to receive a green card showing they are permanent residents.

Iceland debt

Continued from front page

represent more than 40 percent of Iceland's gross domestic product, noted *Business Week*. Just meeting the hefty 5.5 percent interest payments would account for one-quarter of Iceland's revenue.

Demonstrations of up to 2,000 people have been taking place every week opposing the agreement. "The last time the island saw demonstrations on a similar scale was before the government of former Prime Minister Geir Haarde was toppled" three months after the banks collapsed, reported *Business Week*.

"We want to be perfectly clear that a 'no' vote does not mean we are refusing to pay," Finance Minister Steingrímur Sigfússon told the *New York Times*. "We will honor our obligations. To maintain anything else is highly dangerous for the economy of this country."

Leading the coalition government's ongoing efforts to renegotiate a new repayment package is Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurðardóttir of the Social Democratic Party.

Since the bank's collapse, London has been pressuring Iceland's rulers to repay by using anti-terrorism laws to freeze Icelandic assets. Landsbanki, along with Iceland's central bank, have been placed on a UK list of "financially sanctioned regimes," alongside Burma, North Korea, and al-Qaeda, reports the London *Guardian*.

Working people have suffered the biggest blows from the capitalist economic crisis unfolding in Iceland. Unemployment is officially at 9 percent, up from 1 percent in September 2008. The government used the crisis as a pretext to expel "guest workers" from the former Yugoslavia and other countries.

Household debt with credit institutions doubled in the past five years to \$14 billion in 2009, exceeding the country's \$12 billion gross domestic product, according to the central bank.

The island's residents were the world's fifth-richest per capita in 2007, noted *Business Week*, but "ended 2009 18 percent poorer and will see their disposable incomes decline a further 10 percent this year."

Iraq elections

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forces with connections to the former Baathist government under Hussein. Forces loyal to Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, who is currently in Iran, are also loosely tied to the coalition.

The State of Law coalition, dominated by Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's Dawa Party, came out on top in the provincial elections last year. Dawa was originally a Shiite religious party. Although it remains a Shiite-dominated party, it has been remolded with a secular, Iraqi nationalist line.

As prime minister, al-Maliki secured alliances with a section of Sunni capitalists and led a successful U.S.-backed military offensive against al-Sadr's Mahdi Army militia in 2008. He has backed restrictions on allowing former Baathists in the government and worked against Kurdish demands for greater autonomy and control over resources.

The other major contender is the Iraqiya Alliance, a Shiite-Sunni Arab coalition led by former prime minister Ayad Allawi, a Shiite. Two of its leaders were disqualified from running for alleged Baathist sympathies. It promotes a move away from close relations with Tehran, toward greater ties with Arab states in the region, and has broad support in the Sunni areas. Allawi, a major critic of al-Maliki, has accused the government of voter fraud.

While the election reflects some of Washington's gains in the region, what the U.S. rulers have set in motion in Iraq also has the unintended consequence of opening political space for working people to organize and accelerating conflicts that threaten to upset the balance of forces Washington seeks to maintain.

Kurdish parties, which held 19 percent of parliament and the Iraqi presidency, claimed a decisive electoral victory in the oil-rich disputed city of Kirkuk. If true, it could strengthen Kurdish claims to the city and its resources. While Washington maintains an alliance with the Kurdistan Regional Government, it opposes Kurdish claims on Kirkuk as well as the broader Kurdish struggle—a stance shared not only by the Sunni and Shiite capitalists in Iraq, but by those in Turkey, Iran, and elsewhere in the region.

March to D.C. by 4 Miami students reaches Atlanta



Militant/Jacob Perasso

ATLANTA—Two hundred people celebrated the February 27 arrival here of four college students from Miami who are walking to Washington, D.C., to publicize the fight for immigrant rights. Prior to the celebration dozens of people marched with them after hearing about it on the radio. As the demonstration of about 125 people passed through predominantly Black, working-class neighborhoods people cheered from their porches and lawns.

— LISA POTASH AND JACOB PERASSO